



By CAROLYN HALSTED.

COLLEGE FOUNDERS.

It is a difficult matter for the college girl of to-day to realize how comparatively short are the annals of the higher education for women, so natural and assured a fact does her college environment seem to her—and so indispensable. Yet it was only in 1855 that the Legislature of New York granted a charter to Elmira Female College—now simply Elmira College—which claims to be the first institution in the world exclusively and legally authorized to confer upon women the degree of Bachelor of Arts. This date is ten years previous to the establishment of Vassar, generally regarded as the pioneer college for womankind.

Elmira's founder is usually conceded to be the late Simeon Benjamin, an elder in the first Presbyterian Church of Elmira, the home of the college. At least, he headed the subscription and consented to undertake the financial management, acting as chairman and treasurer of the Board of Trustees, also increasing his gifts until they amounted to \$80,000. The Legislature gave the new college \$10,000, the first instance of a State appropriation for the collegiate education of women.

On the twentieth day of September, 1865, Vassar College opened with more than three hundred students the inauguration of a notable era, but the climax of a profound and inspired resolve on the part of one man.

Matthew Vassar was English by birth, of East Dereham, Tud-denham, in the county of Norfolk. Here he first saw the light of day on April 29, 1792, but at the early age of four years removed with his parents to the United States, his father settling as a farmer about three miles from Poughkeepsie, close to which city stands Vassar College, and later opening a brewery in company with his brother. Young Matthew attended school for a time, and after serving in a country store began business in a small way for himself, later in connection with his nephews, Matthew Vassar, Jr., and John Guy Vassar, both of whom entered into his great educational scheme and are remembered by many of the old students with warm feeling and respect, though no one could ever arouse the love and homage which they accorded their "Founder, Father, Friend," who lived to be the central figure at three celebrations of his birthday at the college, known as Founder's Day. He visited the college daily when his health permitted, where he was always sure of an affectionate welcome.

The inception of Mr. Vassar's idea of founding a women's college was really due to one of the gentler sex, his niece, Miss Booth, principal of Cottage Hill Seminary, for his own inclination was to build a public hospital and endow it with his large fortune, having no children to become his heirs. She aspired only to a model school for young women, but her successor, Professor Milo P. Jewett, who had become a close friend to Mr. Vassar, suggested, when the topic was touched upon by the latter, that by establishing a girls' col-



MATTHEW VASSAR.

lege he might become a greater benefactor to his race than by any other act. This was the needed impetus.

Founder's Room is one of the college holy of holies, a peep into which is allowed distinguished guests or the undergraduates by special permission. Its quaint and massive furnishings, its portraits and curios, betray the tastes and inclination of their former owner.

Wells, "the small college on the shore of Cayuga Lake," was the next to materialize, the title of "Seminary" with which it opened in 1868 being changed to "College" in 1870. It owes its being to Henry Wells, one of the proprietors of a well-known express enterprise, who donated land, the main building and the president's house. He was a native of Thetford, Vermont, the third son of the Rev. Shipley Wells, a Presbyterian clergyman who moved to Central New York when Henry Wells was only a lad. The boy soon became self-supporting, working on a farm and at the same time

attending the village school. His aptitude for business early started him on his successful career and brought the fortune which was to accomplish so much for the coming woman. The germ was sown when on a visit to Philadelphia Mr. Wells saw Girard College, the unfinished buildings of which he examined with keen interest.

The story of Wells would be incomplete without mention of the late Hon. Edwin B. Morgan, of Aurora, N. Y., in which town he was born. He was associated with Mr. Wells in business, and when failing health and reverses made the latter from necessity abandon the hope of further benefiting Wells College, it was Colonel Morgan, as he was familiarly known to his townsmen, who stepped into the breach, endowed the college, paid its debt and superintended the erection of Morgan Hall, a gift to it from Mrs. Morgan. He was a public-spirited man, representing at one time his district in Congress, aiding the Federal

cause during the War of the Rebellion, beside giving liberally of his time, money and personal attention to church and educational projects.

Smith College is one of the few advanced seats of learning founded by a woman. Sophia Smith, born in Hatfield, Massachusetts, on August 27, 1796, passed from childhood to womanhood during a period when book learning entered but little into the lives of the daughters of the sturdy New England people, and it is pathetic to read how the little girl, thirsting for knowledge, would day after day find her way to the country school-house and, forbidden to enter with the boys, would sit on the steps and listen to them and to their master's teachings. Later in the day the girls had their dame school in the same little structure, but Sophia craved more than this meagre portion.

Another influence that contributed to the establishment of Smith College was Sophia Smith's inheritance of character and uprightness from her earnest mother, Lois White, her brave grandmother, Mary Morton, and the great-grandmother, Canada Waite, who was born among the Indians when her mother was a captive in Canada.

A friend writes of Miss Smith: "No one could know her and not respect and esteem her. Her course of life was quiet, thoughtful, uneventful. She was not a scholar; she had no opportunities for higher education, but it was easy to

see that she cared less for money than for knowledge. She often lamented that she could not convert some of her gold into treasures of the mind."

Her fortune, amounting to nearly half a million dollars, she gave to found Smith College.

Though Wellesley may not claim a woman as its originator, at least one helped to found it—the wife of Henry Fowle Durant, the eminent Boston lawyer who turned from wealth and legal honors to devote the remaining years of his life to

begin their American careers in the same neighborhood, for it is recorded that Matthew Taylor, born in 1653, bought land in New Jersey from the

Indians by virtue of the grant to his connection, Sir George Carteret, one of the original proprietors of New Jersey. After his marriage Dr. Edward Taylor became a member of the Society of Friends, and even yet Bryn Mawr College shows lingering Quaker traits, as it was the intention of its founder, Dr. Joseph Taylor, to build up a Friends' College



HENRY WELLS.—
WELLES COLLEGE.

the making of a women's college. Wellesley opened its doors in 1875. Mr. Durant lived six years longer, years spent in untiring work for "The College Beautiful," as the girls love to call their Alma Mater. Mrs. Durant has striven no less earnestly to advance its ideals and interests, though for nearly twenty years now she has walked alone. In passing through College Hall, the large main structure, the stranger is struck by the artistic and uplifting beauty of it all, the fine paintings and statuary, the stained glass and harmonious colorings, the intel-



MARY LYON.—MT. HOLYOKE.

lectual and poetic atmosphere lent by objects recalling great minds and personalities, and marvels at the power of the man who planned it all.

Bryn Mawr's benefactor was Dr. Joseph W. Taylor, born in Monmouth County, New Jersey, in the year 1810. His father, Edward Taylor, was a physician, too, and a graduate of Princeton College.

His mother, Sarah Merit, was a descendant of a prominent Quaker family, among New

Jersey's early settlers when the historic little State was still a province of Great Britain. All his ancestors seem to have



MRS. ANNIE NATHAN MEYER.—
BARNARD.

for girls. After taking his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania and practising for a few years he joined his brother in successful business as a dealer in leather. After amassing a neat fortune he travelled in Europe, and soon after his return retired from active commercial life, purchasing an estate in Burlington, where he passed the rest of his days, though later making another journey abroad and also visiting different parts of his own country. Being a man of liberal beliefs, he occupied himself in various philanthropic and



MRS. STANFORD.—
LELAND STANFORD, JR.

public causes, including temperance and the abolition of slavery; as early as 1876 he discussed plans for his most notable achievement, Bryn Mawr College, and for four years devoted his time, money and energies to the development of these elaborate schemes. Deep was the regret felt by his friends that he could not live to participate in the realization of his hopes.

The Woman's College of Baltimore owes its existence to no one man, but to the group forming the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal



SENATOR STANFORD.—
LELAND STANFORD, JR.

Church in 1885, when the institution was incorporated, who determined that it should be of a kind and a spirit to attract to itself not Methodist young women alone, but all denominations whose girls wanted the best and most progressive advantages for the higher education. Their foresight has borne a plentiful harvest, for the students past and present come from all parts of the Union and bring with them nearly as many different beliefs, being as talented and charming a class of young maids as can be met in all feminine collegedom. The sum of about one million and a half of dollars is already represented in the college, and more is to come.

Mary Lyon, born in 1797 in the little mountain town of Buckland, Massachusetts, might rank as the leader among founders of women's colleges. Mrs. Emma Willard, who was ten years Miss Lyon's senior, will always be remembered for her pioneer work, but her Troy Seminary, so famous over half a century ago, has never taken on a collegiate form, though it was regarded as the acme of feminine education in Mrs. Willard's day and is still a flourishing school.

Mary Lyon's childhood was passed on her father's farm, where industry and economy were two ruling factors. She was given a good schooling and always distinguished herself for her ability and absorption in her studies, being a constant delight to her instructors. She early began to teach and at one time had charge of the noted Ipswich Seminary. For years she cherished the idea of a permanent "ladies' seminary," her ambition hardly taking flight as far as to conceive of a woman's college. After many disappointments her patience and courage were at last rewarded, and having interested several men of means in her project, in 1836 she beheld "Mount Holyoke Female Seminary" an incorporated institution. For twelve years she was its principal, and the beauty of her Christian life and elevated standards is still wielding its influence over the youthful scholars who now wear the cap and gown and take their college degrees, for in 1893 the charter was granted making Mount Holyoke College an accomplished fact. It stands today on its broad campus a monument to the noble woman who gave up what seems sweetest and best to most women—the prospect of a happy marriage—to consecrate herself to what she looked upon as her mission.

Of the two affiliated colleges, Radcliffe antedates Barnard by only a short period, though its first title was "The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women," and in September, 1879, twenty-seven young women began definite work under Harvard instructors. To Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gilman belongs much of the credit of developing this scheme. It was commonly known as the "Harvard Annex" until 1894, when it became permanently Radcliffe College.

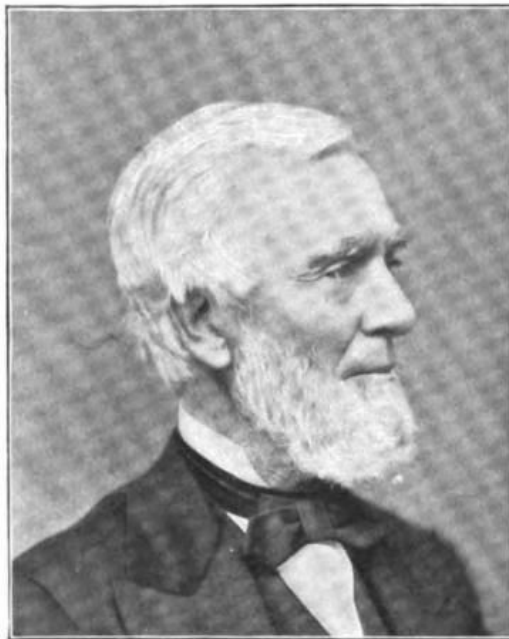
Before Mrs. Annie Nathan Meyer took up the idea of an affiliated college with Columbia University, two attempts had been made for co-education—one by Sorosis, the woman's club; but as both failed, to Mrs. Meyer belongs the honor of definitely establishing Barnard College, and that the task was a herculean one nobody could doubt who followed her successive efforts. Her husband, Dr. Alfred Meyer, provided the first five hundred dollars necessary to make a beginning, and the rest came after many struggles, when some of New York's prominent citizens awoke to the importance of the enterprise.

Mrs. Meyer was born in New York, the native city of her father and father's father. Her great-grandfather made it his home, coming from Somersetshire, England. He was a

Revolutionary patriot in America's early struggle. By a curious coincidence her great-grandfather on her mother's side was once a trustee of Columbia College. Mrs. Meyer is a present trustee of Barnard, now an integral part of Columbia University. She is literary in tastes, has brought out two books and is busy on another, but she is also decidedly domestic and allows nothing to keep her attention from home, husband and little daughter.

The best example of coördination in education is the College for Women of Western Reserve University, opened in 1888. For a few years previously co-education had existed at Adelbert College, the men's college of Western Reserve, but it seemed best to the trustees to discontinue this and form a new system. Among the most instrumental in carrying out this decision were Rev. Hiram C. Hayden, D.D., at that time president of the University; Hon. S. E. Williamson, Hon. William H. Upson, Hon. John Hay, now Secretary of State, and ex-President Rutherford B. Hayes. In active co-operation with the trustees was a board of prominent women, including Mrs. James T. Clark, who donated one hundred thousand dollars to the college; Mrs. Samuel Mather, another liberal donor; Mrs. E. W. Morley and Mrs. S. V. Harkness.

Their labors are rewarded in the prosperity and growth of the college, which is forming a type of character combining the scholastic, the executive and the domestic.



HON. EDWIN B. MORGAN.—WELLS COLLEGE.

Oberlin College feels a just pride in being the first to introduce co-education, and this from its very start in 1833, when of its forty-four students fifteen were women. Perhaps this innovation was the outcome of the youth and progressive spirit of its two founders, Philo P. Stewart and John J. Shipherd, who had been boys together in a Vermont village. They were poor; Stewart had been a missionary to the Indians, Shipherd pastor of a small flock in Ohio. But they knew what they wanted, and their faith, toil and indomitable courage brought it to pass.

That great piece of educational mechanism, the University of Chicago, was put under headway by John D. Rockefeller, who is a resident of New York, though owning a place in Cleveland and still manifesting concern in the welfare of that city. Already he has expended six or eight millions on his huge seat of learning, and the end is not yet.

The splendid university of the Far West, the Leland Stanford, Junior, of Palo Alto, California, was an offering of the late Senator Leland Stanford and his wife, Mrs. Jane Lathrop Stanford, and named for their young son, from whom the idea of the university came directly and largely. Just half a century ago the young lawyer and his bride left Albany, the home of the latter, to make a career in the West. The destruction of his valuable legal library by fire proved the turning point of their destiny, as it decided him to go to California, led by the gold rumors. He arrived in San Francisco in 1852 and opened a store in the mining districts. Mrs. Stanford still tells how in those days she did her own work and took boarders. A few years later she shared his millions and his fame, for as Governor of California and afterward as United States Senator he was a prominent figure in the country's history and worthy the praise accorded him. His great wealth came mostly from the central overland railroad, of which he was chief promoter, and much of it now is lastingly invested in Stanford University, to which Mrs. Stanford, carrying out her husband's desires, made over ten millions in property just one year ago.